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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard
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"Saying it like it is!"

It's been another long and tiring week. I must be getting old, because weeks like this never used to bother me as much a few years ago. Maybe it's the weather, and I'm longing for spring. Maybe I've been at this job too long. Who knows.

I recently received a bulletin from my old alma mater the other day, from the people who publish our PR/Journalism news bulletin. There were a couple of articles in there from two of my old professors (now retired, but still with their hands in). Both articles were reflections of their impressions of how the two fields (journalism and public relations) have changed. Yes, I've seen the change over the years. When I was in college in the early 70's, journalism was a craft, not a profession, according to my journalism professor. There is no news reporting these days, at least like I remember it (shades of Woodward and Bernstein). And, if you don't know who those two journalists are, you likely have no idea what I'm talking about. In those days, a journalist/broadcaster reported the news, not made commentaries about it. Watergate was news; the vice president accidentally shooting his friend during a hunting trip is not - at least for more than a news filler piece. Today, journalists seek celebrity status and hope to make it to a national network anchor desk. In "my day" a reporter hoped to "scoop" the crosstown competition to a story. People don't read newspapers much these days; their exposure to the "news" is more focused on what's in the tabloids. Unbelievable. As much as I enjoy journalism and writing, I am happy that I didn't choose to stay in the field. About the only way that I'd get back in would be to do freelance work for a publication that focused on one of my interests or hobbies. Or, if journalism somehow found itself again, the passion might return.

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING  
compiled by Joe Mirando  
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. As I write this, I'm also watching the women's figure skating 'long program' thingies. If you're in the United States, you've probably noticed something that struck me...

That Dick Button guy hasta shut the hell up!<grin>

Seriously, I normally love watching the skating events because the idea of a nominally intelligent person not only placing trust in those two steel blades between them and the cold, hard ice. The grace and physical control involved simply amazes me.

Add to that the fact that they've got to actually jump up in the air and twirl around, and you've got what must be one of the most difficult regimens around.

This year, the sound of Dick Button dissecting the performance as it's happening simply ruined it for me. More than once I found myself yelling at the television, "I can SEE that she fell, you moron! Now SHUT UP and let me watch!"

I know that I'm not the only one who's noticed this, since I heard a radio DJ mention it too. She, however, noticed something that I didn't. You can relieve a lot of tension with the way you pronounce the commentator's name. She was right! I felt much better when I put the emphasis on the first syllable of his name! <grin>

I may have mentioned it before, but I'm amazed, impressed and gratified that the Olympics have gone as smoothly as they have up to this point. Despite everything that's going on in the world right now, there are only cheers when Olympians of any nation take center stage. No boos, no jeers, no tension, just applause. It sort of redeems my faith in mankind. Now if we could get to the point where we could act that way all the time...

Well, let's get to the news, hints, tips and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

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'Marcelo' asks about uncompressing floppy disk images back onto floppies:

"I would like to start this message saying that i'm really sorry to ask something that i'm sure have been answered many times.

I'm completely blind in the Atari ST world. Been an Amiga user all my life, and now I want to know the ST better.

I have an MegaST 4, and only few days ago I managed to get an original keyboard. This machine is waiting for about 2 years for this keyboard, so I can use it ! Now it's time to run some good software.

The problem is my machine is very "vanilla". Just one disk drive.

I have many ST disk images on CD, but I don't now how to make real floppies out of them.

So I would like to know what's the best, easier, idiot proof way to create these disks.

I tried some programs on the PC side, like the Makedisk, but they doesn't work well on the ST. They refuse to boot. And when I read them from the GEM desk, read errors are reported.

So I would like to know how can I do this from the ST side. Can I use a null modem cable to access the disk images directly on my PC, and then create them on the ST drive?

Is it possible to create a RAMDISK on the ST, without any extra software, so I can put some images there, and then create the disks? I'm really lost here."

Mike Freeman tells Marcelo:

"There is MSA (Magic Shadow Archiver?) on the Atari, as well as ST2DISK. Both might work for you, but I'm not sure if they require a Hard Disk or not. Then there's the problem of getting them from CD to your ST...

PC formatted disks (as long as they are the same type as your ST floppy drive - no 1.44mb disks) should be readable on the Atari, but not necessarily the other way around.

You can download freeware RAMDISK programs on various Atari FTP sites. This might work well for you, if you need it. Otherwise, make sure you have 720k disks (not 1.44mb HD), and either use MAKEDISK on the PC on them, if it will work, or transfer them on the same floppies to the ST and use ST2DISK or MSA. You can also use null-modem transfer, I believe, but I'm not sure how to do this, as I've never needed it."

Ronald Hall adds:

"I believe its the Ghostlink software that you need for the null-modem transfer, but like Mike, I've never actually used it either."

Marcelo replies:

"I think the Ghostlink is what I was looking for to transfer the image files to the Atari.

As I have 4MB of memory, I think that creating a Ramdisk I can copy some imagefiles there, and then use the tools you guys suggested to create the real disks from the imagefiles.

I can imagine how boring will be this task, but it's the only option I can think of right now.

I remember reading somewhere on the Internet, when I was looking for some info on Ghostlink, that you can read files located

on the PC harddrive, as if they where on the ST, even if you cannot execute .prg files.

If this is true it's much easier to create the real disks this way, I think. Hope that the Ghostlink transfer rates aren't too much slow.

This weekend I'll try to create some disks, and then I'll report back to you guys what I can achieve.

Thanks again for your invaluable help."

'Simon' tells Marcelo:

"I've been using Ghostlink for years and, except a few failures from time to time, it worked great.  
The transfer speed is rather slow, but you can access your PC drive directly from any software. So you can ask your Atari software to write back a file that you will select on the PC drive, then go away and have a drink: the ST will transfer the file and write it, you don't have to be there (of course d'ont forget to insert a blank disk ;-)

Later I moved to SCSI Link with HDDriver and a Iomega Jaz drive, much easier and faster... But not really cheap!"

'Phantomm' asks for help with using large hard drives:

"Have a question regarding using very large hard drives on Atari Computers.

As far as I know, TOS 4.04 only allows around 1 gig per partition. Which limits total usable space of around 15 gigs more or less.

Is there any use for a 80 Gig IDE or SCSI hard drive on any Atari?  
In other words, can the extra room on such a large drive be used in any way?"

Martin Byttebier tells Phantomm:

"FreeMint is your friend. Install it and you can use all the space available.

=====quote=====

NEWFATFS

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(completely new written FAT filesystemdriver, support  
FAT/VFAT/FAT32;  
TOS, DOS and Windows compatible)

maximum partition size

FAT16 : 2 GB                      tested: 2 GB

FAT32 : > 16 TB                tested: 10 GB

maximum file size               : 2 GB                tested: 2 GB

block size                       : 512 byte - 32 kb    tested: 512 byte - 32

kb

=====unquote=====

"

Dr. Uwe Seimet, author of HD Driver, adds:

"Yes, by using FAT32 (MagiC or MiNT) or Linux ext2 (MiNT) partitions. Even without FAT32 or ext2 you can use more than 14 FAT partitions with MiNT or MagiC (MiNT up to 31, MagiC up to 25)."

'Jammer' asks for help with his new Falcon:

"Just got a Falcon 030 (4mb no hard drive) and want to add some storage and maybe a flat screen. I fancy a CF card solution as they are quite cheap and quiet. I've an STE with an old Atari hard drive thats too noisy. Is there anyway to connect that to the Falcon? I've also got an STE with an internal IDE drive, would that fit?

I remember seeing on eBay an adapter for using PC monitors with a Falcon, anyone tried one of these?

One last thing, can I add the Falcon to my PC network?

I've just put up some pics of my Falcon on [www.mevagissey.net/atari](http://www.mevagissey.net/atari) Anyone able to tell me where the hard drive is usually mounted. Is there a PDF version of the manual around anywhere?"

Ronald Hall tells Jammer:

"I don't know about a PDF version of the manual. Have you tried googling for it? Might get lucky there. Otherwise, they are about \$20 or so from dealers."

Jammer does some looking around and posts:

"After some quick research, it looks like a 2 1/2" drive will do the trick, it will just plug in and work, with a bit of formatting I think. What height drive, is 9mm Ok ? and where can I get a cable ? Also does size matter :) ? all the drives on eBay are 10Gb plus. (I might just pinch the drive out of my STE)"

Uwe Seimet tells Jammer:

"Note that some old IDE drives may be damaged when formatting them. As long as a drive has no bad sectors formatting does not make sense anyway. The filesystem layout is what is important, and this is created by partitioning, not by formatting. In other words: Partitioning is usually all one needs, even when a drive was formerly used with another operating system."

Ronald Hall adds:

"9mm I think will be okay. Do you know if you're Falcon has the hard drive mounting hardware in place? If not, you may have to try to pick it up. You should be able to get cables from just about anyplace that sells HD stuff. Specifically, Best Electronics and B&C Computervision are 2 Atari dealers that just rule.

You can use the 10 gig models no problem. At this point, I have to recommend spending some dough on HDDriver. IMO, its the best hard drive software for Atari computers. Uwe Seimet posts here often, and gives great support. You're gonna have lots of fun."

Well folks, that's it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Sony PS3 Launch Delayed?  
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!  
.....

### Sony PS3 Launch Could Be Delayed

Sony Corp.'s launch of its next-generation PlayStation 3 video game console could be delayed if industry specifications for some of its technology are not finalized soon, although it is still aiming for a spring rollout, it said on Monday.

The launch of PlayStation 3 (PS3) has been the subject of heavy speculation in the industry as expectations are high for the powerful machine, which will feature cutting-edge technology in its DVD player, processors and graphics.

PS3 will be competing with Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox 360, which went on sale last November, and Nintendo Co. Ltd.'s Revolution, which is expected later this year.

"We're aiming for spring, but we haven't announced specific regions," a spokeswoman for Sony Computer Entertainment said, adding that it was

waiting for the final specifications on some of the technology it is using in the PS3, such as that related to the Blu-ray DVD drive and to input and output video and sound.

The specifications are decided by industry consortiums.

"We're waiting for them until the last possible minute, but the launch could be pushed back if they're not decided soon," the spokeswoman said. If the PS3 is not ready in time, the company will choose the next best timing for the launch, she said.

Sony has been promising a spring launch but has been deliberately vague about exactly when that would be. Analysts have said it could mean anytime between March and the end of Japan's rainy season in June.

Sony's shares fell as much as 4.4 percent on Monday after Merrill Lynch said in a research note last week that the PS3's launch might be delayed by six to 12 months and the cost of production could initially approach \$900 per unit.

Manufacturers typically sell new game consoles at a loss initially to gain market share so they can later make money by selling software - a \$25 billion global market.

But the higher-than-expected cost estimate by Merrill means Sony will have to take a much larger loss on each PS3 unit it sells or sacrifice market share to Microsoft, which is selling its Xbox 360 for about \$400.

Sony currently has about 70 percent of the global market for game consoles, but some analysts have said it could lose as much as 20 percentage points to Microsoft, which is making an aggressive push to increase its 15 percent share.

Nintendo, which also has a 15 percent market share, is taking a different strategy as it aims to increase the number of game players with a unique console and original games.

Merrill Lynch also downgraded its rating on Sony to "sell" from "neutral," saying in its note that Sony could see its earnings decline in the business year from April.

Most analysts took the report in stride as they already expected Sony to launch the PS3 this summer in Japan, followed by a U.S. launch before the Thanksgiving holiday in November. They expect a launch in Europe in early 2007.

"No one is seriously thinking a spring release is realistic any more," said Hiroshi Kamide, an analyst at KBC Securities. "If I were Sony, I wouldn't be that worried about releasing as soon as I possibly could."

Kamide said Sony may wait until it is fully prepared, especially after seeing slow initial sales of Microsoft's Xbox 360 even though it was launched in time for the holidays.

Having led the worldwide console gaming market for the last decade, Sony is counting on the new machine to dominate in all aspects of networked home entertainment - games, movies, music and more.

Yuta Sakurai, a senior analyst at Nomura Securities, said the price of the PS3 was more important than its timing.

"I don't think it matters when Sony launches in the U.S. as long as it's in time for Christmas," Sakurai said. He expects Sony to try to launch the PS3 in Japan in early summer, in time for the big selling season when schools go on holiday in July.

Sakurai estimated that Sony could charge at most 50,000 yen (\$420) for the console.

Retail price estimates by analysts in Japan vary widely from about 40,000 yen to several times that much, primarily because of all of the technology that is packed into the machine, which is expected to be the size of a laptop computer.

The PS3, which can be played simultaneously by up to seven people, will be powered by the "Cell" chip, which is significantly more powerful than Intel Corp.'s Pentium 4, the most common chip for today's PCs and existing game machine processors.

It will also feature a super-powerful graphics chip, a built-in Ethernet port for high-speed Internet access, and Blu-ray, a next-generation DVD format backed by Sony.

Analysts generally agree that Sony will do whatever it can to avoid missing the key year-end holiday season this year, but many believe it will be unable to make the PS3 in great volumes.

Game development for the PS3 is also seen being delayed because the technology specifications have not been finalised.

"Game makers are developing games according to their guesses on what the final specifications might be," said Takeshi Tajima, a BNP Paribas analyst.

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

#### Microsoft Releases Windows Vista Preview

Microsoft Corp. is giving businesses a preview of Vista, the next version of its flagship Windows operating system.

Microsoft has invested heavily in adding features that will make it easier and less expensive for companies to keep their computer networks secure and working smoothly, said Brad Goldberg, general manager for Windows product management.

In a conference call Wednesday, Goldberg said the new operating system would allow people to log onto their office's system remotely without needing to connect through a virtual private network, or VPN, which some users find cumbersome.

Other improvements he noted include:

- \* Safer Web browsing with the inclusion of Internet Explorer version 7.
- \* Easier installation of software fixes, known as patches, to protect computers from attacks.
- \* Improved user account control to let more workers do things like install printer drivers without being set up for administrator access, thereby limiting such access to those who truly need the higher-level functions. It's harder for attacks to spread on computers that don't have administrator access.

Goldberg said the test is being made available to about 500,000 select customers, and the company plans to release the preview to a broader consumer test audience in its next fiscal quarter, which begins in April.

The Redmond-based company remains on track to have Windows Vista in stores in the second half of the year, Goldberg said. Last week, Microsoft spokesman Lou Gellos said the company hopes to have it on store shelves in time for the U.S. holiday season, which typically begins around Thanksgiving.

Microsoft, the world's largest software company, is facing competitors such as Google Inc., whose products threaten Microsoft both on and off the desktop.

More companies are offering free online services that used to be available most conveniently on the desktop, such as e-mail or word processing. Analysts say those services could pose real problems for Microsoft.

### Lenovo Eyes U.S. Market with Self-Branded PCs

Chinese computer manufacturer Lenovo on Thursday took the wraps off of its first self-branded PC products, targeting the small business and consumer markets with inexpensive desktop and notebook machines.

The Lenovo 3000 product line marks a shift by the company away from its connection with IBM following the \$1 billion purchase of Big Blue's PC business in May 2005.

While Lenovo has retained IBM's high-end ThinkPad and ThinkCentre business-oriented brands, the new products are designed for more mass appeal.

"This is a huge statement for the industry," said Frank Kardonski, product manager for Lenovo's notebook PCs. "We are aggressively targeting the growing small-to-midsize business market, which we believe we can serve with our expertise in PC technology. And we have reached a milestone with the first products offered outside of China."

Lenovo unveiled the C Series laptops - which offer wireless (Wi-Fi and Bluetooth) connectivity and multimedia features - and the J Series desktop models that are available with single-core Intel or AMD processors. Prices for the J105 and J100 start at \$349 and \$499, respectively, with the C100 starting at \$599.

Lenovo is providing product support through a collection of tools, including automatic system updates and a system-recovery button for diagnosing and repairing software failures caused by viruses and malware. The company also is touting simplified connectivity for wired or wireless configurations.

"Small business users have told us that these are the features that they want," Kardonski said. "They also want value - not just on pricing but with products that have the latest technology from a company with a solid reputation."

The new product lines represent a significant first step in a market where IBM has had little success, said Forrester Research analyst Simon Yates. "The SMB space is a top priority for Lenovo because it represents about two-thirds of all business PC sales. IBM had ceded that portion of the market to Dell and HP, focusing on the enterprise," he said.

Lenovo now is making its move, he said, by shedding the negative baggage associated with IBM's efforts to target SMBs and consumers while also maintaining the well-known "Think" brand. "The new systems will be marketed in a different way than the Think brand strategy, focusing on value and worry-free computing, which is what SMB customers want," Yates said.

While Lenovo dominates on its home turf and in the broader Asia-Pacific region, the company faces stiff competition from Dell, HP, and Acer in the global arena. "There is an opportunity for them to gain some ground in the SMB market, which is where most of the business PC growth will take place," Yates said.

#### eBay Looks Eastward for Growth

Online auction company eBay Inc said it expects the number of Asia-Pacific users trading on its site to eventually outstrip that for the U.S. and Europe as Internet penetration grows, but it also predicts imminent competition.

More than 30 million of the company's 181 million registered users worldwide are in the Asia-Pacific region, chief executive Meg Whitman said on Thursday.

"These are still small markets but as Internet usage and broadband penetration increase we see these markets growing bigger than our top markets currently," she said.

And in markets like India, the company has seen a rise in high-value transactions and encouraging growth in smaller towns.

"Asia-Pacific is the fastest growing user region with markets like India, China and Korea leading the pack as Internet and broadband penetration rise," Whitman told reporters.

"But we do foresee competition, as e-commerce is a growth area and we see a lot of venture capital money coming," she said.

Rediff.com, the Times Group's indiatimes.com, and New Delhi Television's ndtv.com are among India's biggest e-commerce sites, and there has been a

string of investments recently in online travel sites.

California-based eBay bought Indian online auction company baazee.com in 2004 for about \$50 million. eBay India, the wholly-owned subsidiary, has 2 million users.

"India is still a small fraction of our global revenues, but in 5, 10, 15 years we hope India will be among our top markets," Whitman said.

India has nearly 39 million Internet users, according to industry estimates, just a fraction of its billion-plus population, and equal to less than half its mobile phone user base of more than 81 million. Credit card holders number just 15 million.

About 45-50 percent of eBay India's current turnover comes from the top six cities, but smaller towns are also driving growth due to a lack of modern retailing, said Gautam Thakar, country manager of eBay India.

"I was stunned to learn that jewelry is sold every five minutes on the site - and this is diamond jewelry," he said. Ethnic products like bell anklets, Tibetan prayer wheels and hookah water-pipes have also found buyers, he said.

On eBay India, a mobile handset sells every seven minutes, a digital camera sells every 46 minutes, and a car or motorcycle sells every nine hours. The western state of Maharashtra, India's richest state, makes up 28 percent of its users.

Whitman defended the company's conservative earnings estimate for 2006, which has raised concerns that its growth is slowing as it matures.

"We have a record of meeting our estimates, and we've had a remarkable Q4, so we wanted to give Wall Street an estimate that we're comfortable with," she said.

eBay has forecast revenue will grow to between \$5.7 billion and \$5.9 billion in 2006, which is at the lower end of Wall Street expectations. The average revenue estimate is \$5.9 billion, according to Reuters Estimates.

### Political Rivals Unite Against Paid E-Mail Plan

The two sides of the U.S. political spectrum have found an issue to unite them: free e-mail.

A group of nonprofit organizations and small businesses will announce next Tuesday the formation of a coalition aimed at putting a stop to America Online and Yahoo's plans to charge fees to mass e-mailers. The coalition, expected to be launched at a press event in New York, will be sponsored by the digital rights advocacy group Electronic Frontier Foundation, and it will include two political adversaries: the liberal MoveOn.org and conservative RightMarch.com political action committees.

"We have been putting together a rather large coalition of groups from across the spectrum," said Cindy Cohn, legal director with the EFF. "They are mainly nonprofit or political groups or small-business concerns.... They're all people who can't afford to pay to get their message across."

The coalition wants the two Internet giants to abandon plans to adopt an e-mail certification system developed by Goodmail Systems that could relegate some e-mail to second-class status, Cohn said.

"I think they need to abandon this plan," said Cohn. "The ISPs' view that they can auction off preferred access to my e-mail box is really wrong.... It's not the ISPs' to sell."

AOL and Yahoo first signed on to use Goodmail's CertifiedEmail service last October, but the service has come under scrutiny as the two companies have come closer to deploying it. With CertifiedEmail, senders would agree not to send unsolicited e-mail. They would pay a fee of between one-fourth of a U.S. cent and 1 cent in order for their messages to receive preferential treatment in AOL and Yahoo in-boxes.

AOL is expected to begin using the service "in the next month," and it will be available to Yahoo users "shortly thereafter," a Goodmail spokesperson said.

Earlier this week, two of the coalition members - political action committees MoveOn.org and RightMarch.com - argued that the bulk e-mailer fees would ultimately harm the free exchange of ideas.

"The very existence of online civic participation and the free Internet as we know it are under attack by America Online," wrote the liberal MoveOn.org in its alert, sent out to members Wednesday.

MoveOn.org has started an online petition calling for AOL to abandon the service.

AOL has no intention of backing away from CertifiedEmail, which will be rolled out within 30 days, according to AOL spokesperson Nicholas Graham. Like the U.S. Postal Service's Priority Mail, the service simply gives customers another choice in how to send and receive messages, he said. "We are absolutely intent on using this as an additional tool to protect the sanctity of the e-mail experience for our members."

Graham had no comment on EFF's coalition, saying that it would be inappropriate to comment on it before its unveiling. "The only coalition we care about... is our users," he said.

The conservative RightMarch.com, which was formed in response to MoveOn.org's 2003 "Virtual March on Washington," this week called on its members to contact AOL and Yahoo headquarters, "demanding that they abandon their plans for a 'pay-to-speak' system."

"We spend thousands of dollars a month on e-mail delivery services to make sure all of our members receive our alerts. And very soon, thanks to AOL and Yahoo, we might not be able to afford sending them," said the RightMarch.com alert.

By Thursday, RightMarch.com members had sent more than 28,000 e-mail messages opposing the Goodmail service, said RightMarch.com president William Greene.

Critics like Greene and the EFF are ignoring the consumer benefits that CertifiedEmail provides by assuring recipients that their e-mail messages are legitimate, said Goodmail chief executive officer Richard Gingras. "It's a very important service that e-mail needs today," he said. AOL and Yahoo have made similar claims in the past.

Goodmail plans to introduce a new pricing plan for nonprofits that wish to use the service, Gingras said.

Gingras would not say what this new service will cost, but organizations like RightMarch.com are concerned about any new e-mail costs.

RightMarch.com sends between 2 million and 3 million e-mail messages per week, and one-third of its members use AOL or Yahoo e-mail addresses, said RightMarch.com's Greene.

### Mac-User Sites Shut for Possible Violation

Two busy Web sites that focus on Apple Computer Inc.'s Mac OS X operating system went silent Friday just days after they featured links to information on how to hack the software and run it on non-Apple PCs.

The OSx86 Project Web site stated Apple had served it with a notice on Thursday citing violations of the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act, and the site was reviewing all of its discussion forum postings as a result. The site has always aimed to adhere to copyright laws and is working with Apple to ensure no violations exist, according to a statement by the site administrator.

The other Web site, Win20SX.net, was completely shut down. Administrators there could not be immediately reached for comment.

An Apple spokesman declined to comment Friday on the DMCA-based notices. The federal law prohibits anyone from distributing software or hardware that can circumvent copy protection mechanisms. The law has been criticized at times as being unconstitutional and too broad.

Apple does not authorize the use of its Mac OS on machines other than its own, and earlier this week, the sites posted links to the Web site of a hacker who claimed his software patches could be used to run a version of the Mac OS on a non-Apple machine.

The hacking endeavors are, for now, relegated to a small, technically savvy set, but it underscores a risk Apple faces if a pirated, functional version eventually becomes as accessible and straightforward as installing other software on a computer.

It's a risk that became more apparent after Apple decided to make a historic transition from Power PC chips to Intel Corp.-based chips, the same type that its rivals use in predominant Windows-based PCs.

Apple so far has two Intel-based computers on the market and plans to migrate the rest of its Macs to the Intel platform by the end of the year.

The Mac maker had anticipated some people would try to crack its new Intel-compatible OS X operating system and deeply embedded some warnings to would-be hackers in the software, including one written in the form of a poem.

The OSx86 Project Web site, which was formed after Apple announced its switch to Intel in June 2005, was among the many Mac-user sites that posted a copy of the poetic warning earlier this week.

## Netherlands Arrests 12 in Online Probe

Dutch authorities have arrested 12 suspects in two cities as part of a joint U.S./Dutch investigation into a criminal gang operating the so-called "419" e-mail scam.

The arrests took place during raids of seven houses in Amsterdam and neighboring Zaandam this week, and authorities also seized computers and about \$30,000 in cash, Amsterdam police said. They said that Americans had lost at least \$2.4 million to the gang since the investigation began in September "and likely many times more than that."

The police, in a statement, said the four chief suspects will likely be sent to the United States for prosecution, with the rest to be prosecuted in the Netherlands.

Names and personal details of the suspects were not released.

Under the "419" scam - named after the Nigerian legal code for fraud - criminals send junk e-mail to thousands of unsuspecting people offering them a share in a large fortune if they can only provide a smaller amount of money up front. The criminal takes the money and then disappears.

"Despite repeated publicity and generally distributed warnings, people still fall for these proposals," the police statement said.

The investigation was carried out in cooperation with the U.S. Postal Service and the Dutch Economic and Financial Investigation Bureau.

## Teen Arrested After MySpace.com Posting

A 16-year-old boy was arrested Wednesday after postings on the popular Web site MySpace.com allegedly showed him holding handguns, authorities said.

The teen was being held at a juvenile detention center facing three misdemeanor charges of juvenile possession of a handgun, said district attorney spokeswoman Pam Russell. He is due in court Feb. 27.

Police searched the boy's home after receiving a tip from Evergreen High School on Feb. 10, the same day he was suspended, officials said.

School spokesman Rick Kaufman said parents were calling with concerns and some kept their children home after photographs posted on the boy's profile on MySpace.com, a social networking Web site, began circulating through the community.

One photo allegedly showed him lying on a floor surrounded by nine rifles with the caption, "Angel o' death on wings o' lead."

"The photos were very disturbing, and while the content was not a direct threat, we just felt it was important for us to take appropriate disciplinary action," Kaufman said, adding the student could be expelled.

Evergreen High School is in the same district as Columbine High School, where two teenage gunmen killed 12 students and a teacher before committing suicide in 1999. One of the gunmen had posted a threat on the Internet before the shootings.

### Police Shut Down Major File-Sharing Server

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) has claimed a major victory in the ongoing war against digital content pirates, with law-enforcement officials in Europe this week shutting down a primary server run by the popular eDonkey file-sharing network.

Officials in Belgium and Switzerland put the Razorback 2 server out of commission, the MPA said, noting that Razorback 2 linked to some 170 million copyright-protected files, including movies, software, games, and TV shows. The site was visited regularly by people throughout world, with the vast majority of them based in Europe.

"This is a major victory in our fight to cut off the supply of illegal materials being circulated on the Internet via peer-to-peer networks," said MPA Chairman and CEO Dan Glickman in a statement.

Swiss authorities arrested the site's operator at his residence in that country. At the same time, Belgian police seized the site's servers. The Razorback 2 server had an estimated one million users, according to a Reuters report.

Movie studios, record labels, and other content providers have taken an aggressive stance against illegal file-sharing in an effort to stem the flow of intellectual-property theft. The MPA estimates that the film industry lost \$3.5 billion to movie piracy in 2004, not including losses due to Internet piracy. According to a study by Smith Barney, losses were \$5.4 billion in 2005, including Internet piracy.

Several lawsuits have been filed against P2P networks by content providers, with favorable rulings in most recent cases, but it's a fight that will be hard to win, given the plethora of file-sharing services.

In June 2005, for example, the Supreme Court ruled that file-sharing service Grokster and StreamCast Networks, which operates the Morpheus service, are responsible for their users' actions.

"The action against eDonkey will probably have a minimal impact on illegal P2P operations because people will move on to a new service," said Yankee Group analyst Michael Goodman. "It's like the proverbial iceberg - the film and music industries can attack that 20 percent of file-sharing services that is visible, but the other 80 percent is a lot harder to track down."

And, said Goodman, once the P2P software is widely distributed through network operators such as eDonkey and BitTorrent, it is like trying to stuff the genie back in the bottle.

The analyst also suggested that content providers must bite the bullet and learn to leverage the power and influence of P2P networks, even though such services are at odds with their current business models. "That would be hard for the film and music industries to swallow, but they will never eliminate illegal file sharing," he said.

The MPA late last year reached an agreement with BitTorrent in which the P2P operator agreed to remove certain search-engine links that point users to copies of pirated content owned by movie companies. That pact was hailed not only as a victory for the film industry, but also as a major step toward collaborating with technology providers on fighting film piracy.

In 2004, the MPA and other groups in Europe investigated more than 41,000 cases of piracy, assisting law-enforcement officials in conducting nearly 20,000 raids. These activities resulted in the seizure of millions of pirated CDs and the initiation of more than 15,800 legal actions.

In addition to its moves on the legal front, the MPA also has made software freely available to help crack down on illegal file-sharing. Called Digital File Check, the software was developed by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) to identify file-sharing software and remove copyright-protected music or video files from any computer.

Still, illegal content exchanges are a problem, with most attempted fixes thus far having little impact on the amount of pirated content online. A recent Yankee Group survey indicates an installed base in the U.S. of some 40 to 50 million users of file-sharing networks.

#### Zero-Day Exploit Turns Up Heat On Mac OS X

An exploit for the recently-disclosed zero-day vulnerability in Apple Computer's Mac OS X has gone public, security vendors said Thursday, increasing the risk that the bug will be used by attackers.

Code has been posted to the Metasploit Project site, which rolls out exploit modules for its Framework tool on a regular basis. The code targets the so-called "Safe file" flaw in Apple's Safari browser.

The exploit, which was crafted by someone identified as "HD Moore," who has been credited with other exploits posted for Metasploit's Framework, uses a malicious ZIP file containing a shell script.

"[This] targets a vulnerability in the Safari Web browser 'Safe file' feature, which will automatically open any file with one of the allowed extensions," said Symantec in a warning to customers of its DeepSight Threat Management System. "A malicious user may provide a crafted archive file which contains shellcode to be executed on the browser's system."

Symantec repeated advice from earlier this week that Mac administrators should disable the "Open Safe Files" feature in Safari.

On Tuesday, when the vulnerability first surfaced, an Apple spokesman acknowledged the flaw, and said the Cupertino, Calif.-based developer was working on a patch. He could not provide a timeline for a fix, however.

As of Thursday morning, Apple had not patched the Mac OS X vulnerability.

#### Microsoft Tests Windows Live Parental Controls

Microsoft is testing a new Web-based service that will allow parents to control their children's online activity and block access to sites that are not appropriate for kids.

Several Microsoft-watcher blogs, such as Liveside.net and Neowin.net have reported that a service called Windows Live Family Safety Settings is currently in beta. The service allows parents to monitor, control and filter online activity by creating specific accounts for their children, according to an e-mail invitation to the beta of the service posted on Neowin.net.

Using the service, parents can create settings so certain PC accounts will not have access to sites featuring content that pertains to subjects like alcohol, bomb making or pornography, according to a screen shot of the new service posted by Liveside.net. They also can create content filters and view activity reports of where their children have been online.

In a statement through its public relations firm Waggener Edstrom on Thursday, Microsoft confirmed that Family Safety Settings is in "early testing," but declined to comment further on when it might be generally available.

Microsoft introduced Windows Live as one of a set of Web-based services the company plans to offer in an effort to compete with companies such as Google and Yahoo, which use the Internet as a delivery platform for hosted services. Windows Live allows users to aggregate content and services on a customized home page. Both Windows Live and a small-business Web-site hosting service, Office Live, are in beta now.

Microsoft also is using the brand "Windows Live" for other offerings that are part of its larger Web-based services strategy. The company plans to relaunch MSN Search as Windows Live Search soon, and the next generation of MSN Messenger will be called Windows Live Messenger.

The Windows Live Family Safety Settings service is similar to a comparable feature that will be a part of Windows Vista, which Microsoft has demonstrated publicly. Bolstering security has been a major design goal for Vista, and Microsoft already has already announced a host of new security features that will be a part of the OS. In addition to the new parental controls, Microsoft also will offer a new antiphishing tool in Internet Explorer 7, the browser included in Vista, to help protect users from e-mail scams.

#### AOL to Charge Same for Dial-Up, Broadband

America Online Inc., seeking to encourage its subscribers to sign up for high-speed connections, is raising the price of its main dial-up plan to equal that of its new broadband offerings.

That means most subscribers will pay \$25.90 a month for either dial-up or broadband beginning March 9, although AOL is offering discounts to dial-up subscribers who commit to a year. AOL currently charges \$23.90 a month for unlimited dial-up access.

"We're doing this because a majority of AOL members will be able to get high-speed connections and access the AOL service for this new price," spokeswoman Anne Bentley said Tuesday. "Hopefully it's an encouragement for

them to get high-speed connections."

Although AOL has been shifting its focus to providing free articles, video and other materials on its ad-supported Web sites, the company sees paid broadband accounts as key to making that strategy work.

AOL believes broadband will help boost usage and hence advertising. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, those with broadband at home are 52 percent more likely than dial-up subscribers to use the Internet on a given day, and the typical broadband user spends about 23 percent more time online daily.

In recent weeks, AOL announced partnerships with leading broadband providers to provide high-speed AOL subscription packages, which include the Internet connection, AOL e-mail addresses with unlimited storage and parental-control and security software.

The deals are with the four remaining Baby Bells - BellSouth Corp., Verizon Communications Inc., AT&T Inc. and Qwest Communications International Inc. - and with two leading cable providers - Time Warner Cable, which like AOL is a unit of Time Warner Inc., and Charter Communications Inc.

AOL said most of its current customers will be served by at least one of those companies.

Details vary, but the packages generally cost \$25.90 a month, \$29.90 through BellSouth. The Qwest plan is for the first year only.

With Verizon and Time Warner, it is a limited-speed, 768-kilobit-per-second offering. It is even slower - 384 kilobits - for Charter. Dial-up is about 50 kilobits, while standard broadband lines typically reach 1.5 megabits or higher.

Subscribers are being notified by e-mail that they can essentially get high-speed for the same price as dial-up.

Those who can't get or don't want broadband can request lower-priced plans, including an unadvertised offering of about \$18 with a one-year commitment (the broadband plans through the Baby Bells also require the year's commitment).

But if they do nothing, they are kept on the dial-up plan and will be charged \$2 more a month.

Left unchanged are the \$14.95 limited plan with 10 hours of dial-up and the \$239.40 annual prepaid plan, which works out to \$19.95 a month and allows subscribers to get a partial refund if they cancel early.

As of Dec. 31, AOL had about 19.5 million U.S. subscribers, down from a peak of 26.7 million in September 2002. About 75 percent are on dial-up.

#### Microsoft Rivals File Antitrust Complaint

A group of Microsoft Corp.'s rivals filed a complaint with the European Commission on Wednesday, alleging its business practices threatened to deny real choice among competing software products.

The European Committee for Interoperable Systems - which includes International Business Machines Corp., Oracle Corp., RealNetworks Inc., Nokia Corp. and Sun Microsystems Inc. - said it was asking EU regulators to end practices that reinforced Microsoft's monopolies and extended its market dominance into current and future products.

"We are at a crossroads," the group said in a statement. "Will one dominant player be permitted to control those conditions, or will the rules that guarantee competition on the merits prevail, to the benefit of all?"

Microsoft said the companies were responding to innovation with litigation.

"We have come to expect that as we introduce new products that benefit consumers, particularly with the kind of breakthrough technologies in Office 12 and Windows Vista, a few competitors will complain," it said.

ECIS did not make the complaint public, citing business confidentiality. It mentions Microsoft's Office software suite, which packages word processing, spreadsheet and office management tools, but ECIS lawyer Thomas Vinje would not say if Microsoft's forthcoming operating system, Vista, was part of the complaint.

The European Commission said it has already received another complaint about Vista but has not yet decided to open a probe.

Microsoft described ECIS as a front for IBM and other rivals who constantly tried to use regulatory complaints to their business advantage.

Vinje insisted the group had existed since 1989 as a "pretty central player" on copyright and other software issues.

"This is a matter of great concern to a great swathe of the industry," he said.

Several ECIS members - such as Novell Inc. and RealNetworks - have backed away from openly supporting the EU as it defends itself from Microsoft's legal challenge after striking deals with Microsoft, leaving broad industry groups such as ECIS and the Software & Information Industry Association in the ring.

"Microsoft is perhaps the most powerful company in the world," said Vinje. "Companies have legitimate reasons to fear retribution for making their concerns known."

The group also includes smaller software companies such as Norway's Opera Software ASA, which makes a Web browser, and two Linux operating system businesses - Red Hat Inc. and the upstart Linspire, which was forced to change its name from Lindows after Microsoft sued for trademark infringement.

ECIS' complaint targets areas not covered by the EU's 2004 antitrust ruling, which found Microsoft had abused its position as a market leader by bundling media software into its near-ubiquitous Windows desktop software and squeezing rival media players out of the market.

Vinje said the group had sent the commission "lots of binders" detailing evidence and analysis from prominent economists covering issues such as bundling and Microsoft's refusal to supply interoperability information needed to make rival products work with Windows.

The 2004 ruling primarily addressed media player and server software. Vinje said the complaint was wide-ranging, covering both existing and future products, but he would not elaborate beyond saying Office was among them.

"If Microsoft had complied with respect to the 2004 decision, we would not have to file a complaint," he said. "They have replicated this behavior."

The group's chairman Simon Awde said strong antitrust law enforcement seemed to be the only way to stop "the sustained anticompetitive behavior of Microsoft."

"The limits on Microsoft practices established in European antitrust law, most notably by the Commission's 2004 decision, now need to be rapidly and broadly enforced," he said in a statement.

In March 2004, the EU ordered Microsoft to offer a version of Windows without the Media Player software, to share communications code with rivals and pay a record 497 million euros (\$613 million) fine.

Microsoft's legal challenge against the ruling will be heard by the Court of First Instance, the EU's second-highest court, in late April.

## 12 Nigerians Arrested in Holland for Internet Scam

Dutch police said they had arrested 12 Nigerians in connection with an Internet scam in which emails were sent to Americans tricking them into investing in non-existent schemes.

The Nigerians were detained on suspicion of committing fraud or involvement in fraud in the scheme, which earned them a total two million dollars.

They were arrested Tuesday after raids on premises in Amsterdam and the central city of Zaandam, during which police seized 25,000 euros in cash, computers and fake travel documents.

Most of the victims of the scam were US citizens. Four of the men detained were arrested on the request of US authorities, who cooperated in the investigation.

The gang has posted some 100,000 emails to potential victims, police said.

Computer users across the world are regularly bombarded by emails from Nigerian crooks seeking to trick them into handing over bank details or making advance payments on non-existent money-making schemes.

Experts say the so-called 419 fraudsters - named after the relevant section in Nigeria's criminal code - steal hundreds of millions of dollars every year from unsuspecting targets.

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